

**11/3/22 Thursday**

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By Vote of 185-2, UN Condemns US Embargo of Cuba for 30th Year in a Row  
By - Fantine Gardinier

The United Nations General Assembly voted on Thursday to condemn the US blockade of Cuba, which has been in place since shortly after a socialist revolution swept the US-backed government out of power in 1959.

In the vote, 185 nations came out against US policy. The only two countries to vote against the resolution were the United States and Israel. Two nations also abstained from the vote: Ukraine, where a US-backed nationalist government has held power since a coup in 2014, and Brazil, where the anti-communist government of Jair Bolsonaro has [two months left in power](#). A notable change was Colombia, a longtime US ally that has typically abstained from the vote, but which voted against the blockade on Thursday. Gustavo Petro, Colombia's first-ever left-wing president, won the August elections and [brought with him significant changes](#) in government policy when he took office.

Demonstrators protested outside the White House a day before the vote, carrying signs saying "Let Cuba Live" and calling for an end to the blockade.

'Bring About Hunger, Desperation and Overthrow'

It was the 30th year in a row that the UN has voted to condemn the US' actions - every year since 1992. However, the blockade was put in place in late 1960, as the new Cuban government under communist leader Fidel Castro edged closer to the Soviet Union after being snubbed by the Eisenhower administration in Washington.

That year, a US [Department of State memorandum](#) summarized the US government's goal of overthrowing Castro, which it acknowledged enjoyed the support of the majority of the Cuban population.

"The only foreseeable means of alienating internal support is through disenchantment and disaffection based on economic dissatisfaction and hardship," the memo said. It recommended a policy that would be "adroit and inconspicuous as possible" while aiming to deny "money and supplies to Cuba, to decrease monetary and real wages, to bring about hunger, desperation and overthrow of government."

Cuba-US relations have ebbed and flowed since, including a notable rapprochement in 2015 that quickly ended when Donald Trump became president and introduced [243 new sanctions on Cuba](#), but the embargo has never been relaxed.

'An Act of Economic War'

Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno [Rodriguez presented a report](#) to the UN last month stating that the blockade had cost Cuba \$154.2 billion since 1960, and that during the first 14 months of US President Joe Biden's administration, it caused \$15 million in damages every day.

"For over six decades, we have resisted a ruthless, unilateral, economic, commercial and financial blockade, extremely intensified to unprecedented levels since 2019 and during the pandemic," [Rodríguez told the UNGA](#) during its regular session in late September.

"The US government has put additional pressures on governments, banks and business people worldwide, interested in relations with Cuba. All our sources of revenue and the inflow of foreign currency are being obsessively persecuted with the aim of provoking economic collapse. As a result, the Cuban economy has come under huge pressures affecting industry; the provision of services; creating shortages of food and medicines and undermining consumption and the general well being of the population," Rodríguez said.

"The human damage to all the Cuban families this policy has generated, impossible to quantify, is stark, real and significant," he added. "The blockade is an act of economic war in times of peace."

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Egypt's Alexandria Likely to be Reclaimed by the Sea by 2100, Scientists Warn  
By - Fantine Gardinier

Egypt's second-largest city and largest port was founded in Antiquity by Alexander the Great and was once the center of Mediterranean culture. However, thanks to climate change-induced sea level rise, the metropolis will likely be lost before the century is out.

A group of scientists have raised alarm at the increasing pace of sea level rise and its impact on the Nile Delta, a vast, densely populated region of Egypt that is home to the country's second-largest city: Alexandria.

Within 80 years, the level of the Mediterranean Sea could rise by 1 meter, inundating low-lying coastal areas and shifting the coastline inland by several kilometers, according to a report by the Cyprus Institute's Climate and Atmosphere Research Center and the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry.

"This would imply severe challenges for coastal infrastructure and agriculture, and can lead to the salinization of coastal aquifers, including the densely populated and cultivated Nile Delta," said George Zittis, a climate researcher at the Cyprus Institute in Aglandjia, who co-authored the report.

The 1-meter sea level increase represents the worst-case scenario, but even the more likely situation, a 0.6-meter increase, would still have catastrophic consequences for the region. Indeed, the sea is already moving inland, with more than 3 kilometers of land having been lost since the 1960s.

The Egyptian government has embarked on numerous projects to slow down the loss of coastline, including planting new reed beds [and mangrove thickets](#), as well as reinforcing seawalls and the shoreline with riprap and concrete breakwaters. However, as the global sea level continues to rise, such defensive elements can only do so much.



"If it gets higher, the trees will die," Sayed Abuel-Ezz, a mango farmer in the delta, told the [Associated Press](#) about the sea. He and many other farmers told the AP that salt penetration of the soil has already greatly impacted their crops.

The Nile Delta is one of the world's largest river deltas, forming where the Nile fans out across a broad plain as it approaches the Mediterranean Sea. The fertile region is some 240 kilometers wide, spanning from Alexandria in the west to Port Said, the gateway to [the Suez Canal](#), in the east, and almost reaches Cairo, 160 kilometers inland.

The region is home to 40% of Egypt's 104 million people and is responsible for half of the country's economic activity, including farms, fisheries, and the port facilities in Port Said, Damietta, and Alexandria, the lattermost of which is Egypt's second-largest city.

Alexandria was founded by the Macedonian Greek conqueror Alexander the Great in 331 BCE, the first and greatest of many Alexandrias founded between Egypt and Uzbekistan during the course of his conquests. [For centuries after](#), the city was a global center of learning, culture, art, and the seat of power of many Egyptian monarchies. Today, Alexandria is home to 5.5 million people, and along with nearby Al-Dukhaylah, handles half the country's foreign trade.

Another danger Alexandria faces is that it is sinking by about 3 millimeters per year, making flooding easier, such as the [highly destructive floods](#) in 2015 and 2020. Numerous dams on the Nile, used to generate electricity, have stemmed the regular flow of silt downriver, which has affected both soil fertility and increased erosion.

Egypt's Sharm el Sheikh, in the Sinai, is set to host COP27, the latest United Nations climate change conference, later this month.

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Joe Rogan Admits 'No Proof' Behind Story He Told About Schools Putting Litter Boxes in Bathrooms

By - Fantine Gardinier

Numerous states and school districts have introduced rules in recent years barring transgender students from using the public bathrooms for their gender. It's just one part of a wide-ranging conservative offensive aimed at delegitimizing the identities of transgender people in the US. American podcaster Joe Rogan has walked back claims he made on his show last month about schools being forced to place litter boxes, normally used by house cats, in their bathrooms to be used by "furry" students who identify as cats.

"I don't think they actually did it," he admitted on his show recently. "I think there was discussions about doing it because there was one particularly wacky mother, but there is - it doesn't seem that there's any proof that they put a litter box in there."

Rogan was interviewing Michael Shermer, author of the new book "Conspiracy: Why the Rational Believe the Irrational," [on his podcast](#) and the discussion came around to the litter box story. Shermer pointed out that it was a rumor that had been fact-checked and found false, and was being used by conservatives to attack liberals.



"That got spread around as a meme because it kind of fit the conservative view of liberals and their confusion about gender and sex," Shermer said, calling it "an urban legend."

"I fed into that," Rogan said, admitting he'd been swept up by the rumors. He said he'd gone back and tried to verify the story [he told last month while interviewing](#) former US Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), and couldn't find proof.

Rogan explained that he had "entertained the idea" because of another encounter he'd had with a similar myth a decade ago involving claims that attendees at a furry convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, had requested their food be delivered to them in bowls "so they could eat it like animals" and that they had asked for a litter box in the lobby.

"You can always find somebody," Shermer said as Rogan and his producer, "Young Jamie," recounted how their research into the "furry" subculture showed just how rare the behavior really is. "So there's an element of truth to the conspiracy theory... and then it gets blown up into something else," he added, comparing it to [the "Satanic Panic" of the 1980s](#), which spread the myth that Satan worship was being introduced into preschools across the country by conspiring Satanists.

Despite Debunking, Candidates 'Not Backing Down'

After Rogan's interview with Gabbard came out, which included his story about a school his friend's wife formerly taught at and was allegedly forced to put a litter box in the girls' bathroom, [NBC published an investigation](#) into the string of similar claims.

According to the news company, at least 20 Republican candidates have repeated the claim, which go back months before Rogan's show, but after reporters investigated the candidates' claims, they found that not a single one of them turned out to be true.

Despite the rebuttals, some politicians have continued to push the claims, such as Don Bolduc, a GOP candidate for US Senate in New Hampshire. Asked about his claims on Wednesday, Bolduc said he had only been faithfully reproducing the rumors he'd been told.

"So what I was talking about is all the craziness going on in our schools. And this is just one of them," Bolduc told a reporter. "And I had a parent and a student in that audience who came up to me and told me all about it. I've had that all across the state. So I'm only articulating what I heard from Granite Staters, parents, children."

He then turned it into an attack on his rival, Democratic Sen. Maggie Hassan, saying it was part of her "bad education policies."

"I'm not backing down," Bolduc said, asserting that the school district had lied before about other policies, so "they need to prove it to us, I don't need to prove it to them."

Across the US, a wave of conservative politicians have [ramped up their attacks on LGBTQ rights](#), focusing especially on transgender people and on children, who they have claimed are being targeted and victimized by transgender adults and pushy doctors. Dozens of laws have been passed restricting the rights of trans children and adults, including to access healthcare, public facilities associated with their gender, to play on gendered sports teams according to their gender, and for their identities to be respected.

The trend has corresponded with a marked [increase in right-wing violence](#) targeting LGBTQ people, including the known [murders of 32 transgender people](#) in the US in 2022.



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24 More Graves Excavated in 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre

By - Mary Manley

For 18 hours between May 31 and June 1, 1921, a white mob attacked the Black-majority neighborhood of Greenwood in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Greenwood was considered Tulsa's "Black Wall Street" due to its thriving business district where 10,000 Black residents financially prospered and spurred resentment among white supremacists.

America's [Black Wall Street](#), which consisted of brick and wood-framed homes, grocery stores, hotels, nightclubs, billiard halls, theaters, doctor's offices and churches, took less than 24 hours to be destroyed by an angry mob of white supremacists. Hundreds of Black residents were murdered and \$1.8 million worth of property was destroyed (\$27 million today) and years of potential Black generational wealth for the community's children and grandchildren were stomped out.

On [Tuesday](#) forensic scientists uncovered 24 additional unmarked graves belonging to victims of the 1921 massacre, three of which contained child-sized coffins, after the latest excavation which began last week. Last year, [researchers](#) found 19 unidentified bodies as a part of their investigation, which was first introduced by the city's mayor in 2018. Those bodies have since been reburied. The city first began test excavations in July 2020 and discovered multiple coffins in the Sexton area of Oaklawn Cemetery in October 2020.

Four of the graves discovered this week will be excavated by hand before researchers are able to determine if they should be exhumed for further analysis.

"Experts continue to be narrowly focused on which graves will be exhumed and have determined that no child-sized burial will be," the city's statement reads.

The purpose of the probe is to discover just how many people were killed in the massacre, with historians estimating that as many as [300 Black people](#) were killed, all of which are believed to be buried in a series of mass graves. The burials, which took place days following the massacre, occurred under martial law, so family members of the victims were barred from witnessing the burials of their loved ones.

The 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre remained largely unheard of after it was buried by the local government and newspapers. But in 2018, Tulsa Mayor G.T. Bynum announced an investigation into the massacre that would allow the city to search for unmarked mass graves after he first learned that there was a possibility that they existed in 2012, when he was still a city councilor.

"It is the great tragedy in the history of our city. It's something that was such a point of shame for our community for so many years that people did not talk about it," Bynum said in [2018](#). "This is a murder investigation. Whether you were murdered in 2018 or 1921, the city will do everything we can to find out what happened with you and bring that to justice."

The Oklahoma Historical Society has deemed the Tulsa Race Massacre the "single worst incident of racial violence in American history."



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NBA's Nets Suspend Kyrie Irving Following Anti-Semitic Behavior

By - Mary Manley

The Brooklyn Nets suspended Kyrie Irving for at least five games without pay on Thursday, saying they were "dismayed" by the NBA star's response after he was criticized for posting a link to anti-semitic material.

The Nets said in a statement they had made repeated efforts to work with Irving on the issue, but finally felt that his "failure to disavow anti-semitism when given a clear opportunity to do so is deeply disturbing, is against the values of our organization, and constitutes conduct detrimental to the team."

Irving, 30, had posted a link to an Amazon documentary called "Hebrews to Negroes: Wake Up Black America", a 2018 film which contains antisemitic conspiracy theories, and a fabricated quote from Adolf Hitler. The Tweet has since been deleted, but Irving didn't back down from his decision to share the Tweet, and refused to apologize for sharing the film.

"I didn't mean to cause any harm. I'm not the one who made the documentary," Irving told reporters in a press conference on Thursday when asked if he would apologize.

"Where were you when I was a kid figuring out that 300 million of my ancestors are buried in America. Where were you guys asking those same questions when I was a kid learning about the traumatic events of my familial history and what I'm proud to come from," Irving told reporters. "And proud to stand here and why when I repeat myself that I'm not going to stand down, it has nothing to do with dismissing any other race or group people."

"I'm just proud of my heritage and what we've been through and the fact that this has pinned me against the Jewish community and I'm here answering questions of whether or not I'm sorry or not about something I didn't create and was something I shared, and I'm telling everybody I'm taking responsibility, than that's where I sit," he added.

"Those falsehoods are unfortunate," Irving said, referring to content in the film. "And it's not that I don't believe in the Holocaust. I never said that. Never, ever have said it. It's not come out of my mouth. I never Tweeted it. I never liked anything like it. So the Holocaust in itself is an event that means something to a large group of people that suffered something that could have been avoided."

Irving's suspension comes a day after he and the Brooklyn Nets donated a combined [\\$1 million](#) to the Anti-Defamation League. However, NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, who is Jewish, said Irving made a "reckless decision" and was disappointed that Irving didn't directly apologize.

"While we appreciate the fact that he agreed to work with the Brooklyn Nets and the Anti-Defamation League to combat antisemitism and other forms of discrimination, I am disappointed that he has not offered an unqualified apology and more specifically denounced the vile and harmful content contained in the film he chose to publicize," the commissioner said. Silver added that he will meet with Irving within the next week.

"Over the last several days, we have made repeated attempts to work with Kyrie Irving to help him understand the harm and danger of his words and actions, which began with him publicizing



a film containing deeply disturbing antisemitic hate. We believed that taking the path of education in this challenging situation would be the right one and thought that we had made progress with our joint commitment to eradicating hate and intolerance," the Brooklyn Nets said in their [statement](#).

"We were dismayed today, when given an opportunity in a media session, that Kyrie refused to unequivocally say he has no antisemitic beliefs, nor acknowledge specific hateful material in the film. This was not the first time he had the opportunity---but failed---to clarify."

"Such failure to disavow antisemitism when given a clear opportunity to do so is deeply disturbing, is against the values of our organization, and constitutes conduct detrimental to the team. Accordingly, we are of the view that he is currently unfit to be associated with the Brooklyn Nets. We have decided that Kyrie will serve a suspension without pay until he satisfies a series of objective remedial measures that address the harmful impact of his conduct and the suspension period served is no less than five games."

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German Chancellor Scholz Arrives in Beijing

By - Mary Manley

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz arrived in Beijing on Friday, an AFP reporter traveling in his entourage said, for a visit in which he is seeking to bolster a vital economic relationship in the face of growing questions about his country's heavy reliance on the authoritarian state. Scholz's plane landed in the Chinese capital around 09:40 AM local time (0140 GMT), for a visit during which he is set to meet with China's President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. Scholz's visit comes after a deal which he pushed through his cabinet last week. That deal includes a compromise with the Chinese state-owned shipping company, China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) which will allow COSCO to buy a [24.9% stake](#) in one of Hamburg's port terminals. However, six ministers in Scholz's cabinet opposed it.

Members of Scholz's [cabinet](#) were not the only political leaders who opposed his deal with COSCO. A senior United States Department official said on Wednesday that the US also opposed Chinese control of a stake in the Hamburg port terminal.

German lawmakers both in Scholz's own party as well as the opposition are nervous that the country will become too economically dependent on China, though the deal has yet to be finalized.

"The optics are not great," says Noah Barkin, a researcher for the think tank Rhodium Group. "It appears that Scholz, shortly before heading to Beijing, is offering the Chinese government a gift."

But Wang [Yiwei](#), Jean Monnet Chair Professor and director of the Center for European Studies at Renmin University, argues that Germany is already economically dependent on China as Germany faces economic headwinds while China has a hold on enormous industries including shipbuilding and electric cars.

On Friday morning Scholz and a delegation of business leaders landed in Beijing for a one-day visit. His arrival in Germany marks the first visit by a G7 nation leader to China in three years following the country's strict zero-COVID-19 policy. His meeting with Xi and Premier Li Keqiang will [reportedly](#) cover difficult topics such as human rights issues, Taiwan and German companies accessibility to the Chinese market.

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Jeff Bezos is Reportedly Looking to Purchase Washington Commanders, Alongside Jay-Z  
By - Mary Manley

The football team would not be Bezos' first purchase in Washington, DC. The second wealthiest man in the world already owns a mansion in the city, The Washington Post, (which is published in DC), Amazon offices, and rows of Whole Foods to feed Washingtonians.

Jeff Bezos, 58, is reportedly looking to bid on the football team the Washington Commanders after it was revealed that its owners, Daniel and Tanya [Snyder](#), were considering selling it. The couple has owned the team since 1999, but recently hired BofA Securities and said they are considering "potential transactions." The Commanders are worth \$5.6 billion, reportedly, making them the sixth most valuable team in the National Football League (NFL).

But Bezos isn't the only celebrity eyeing the possible venture. Rapper, record producer, and entrepreneur Jay-Z, 52, is also reportedly interested in purchasing the team according to an American news outlet. Bezos may make the purchase as a partnership with the rapper who previously owned a stake in the Brooklyn Nets, said one insider.

Jay-Z [reportedly](#) has a net worth of \$1.5 billion, while Bezos has a net worth of [\\$120.3](#) billion, though that number seems to fluctuate regularly.

In 2019 an American news source first reported that Bezos had expressed interest in purchasing a football team, but has been waiting for a team to become available. The Snyders may not sell the entire team, though, but could consider adding a minority owner to their group. The couple has reportedly already had at least four phone calls with individuals who are interested in buying the team.

According to a report in [2017](#) on billionaire wealth by UBS and PwC, billionaires purchase sports teams as a "philanthropy" effort and view owning a sports team as being a patron of the arts.

"Billionaires are turning their attention to sports," the report said. "As the price tags on sports clubs appreciate, often it's only billionaires who have the financial firepower to buy them and make the necessary follow-on investments."

"Yet owning a sports club is more than a prestige project or business venture," the report said.

"In the US and to a certain extent in Europe, this is a chance to promote your community, to establish a legacy as the person who took the community's sports club to great success."

"One billionaire told us that you do not really buy sports clubs for financial returns," the report added. "Instead it opens the door to amazing people – you sit at the table with 'stars, sheikhs,



famous businessmen and regular guys from around the world, all in the same room, all talking only about the ball."

[Dan Snyder](#) is most likely feeling pressured to sell the Washington Commanders because of a report that surfaced in 2018 when the sports team's cheerleaders said they were sexually harassed and intimidated by the team and their sponsors. The allegations included claims from over 40 women that during Snyder's tenure as owner, female staff members were pressured to dress and/or act in a sexual manner around clients in order to close sales deals.

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Yellen to Visit India, Bali for G20 From November 11-16 - Treasury

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of the Treasury Janet Yellen will head to India and Indonesia next week to participate in US-India economic dialogue and G20 meetings, the Treasury Department said on Friday.

"Yellen will travel to New Delhi, India to participate in the US-India Economic and Financial Partnership on November 11. Secretary Yellen will then travel to Bali, Indonesia to represent the United States at the G20 Joint Finance and Health Ministers' Meeting on November 12 and accompany President Biden at the G20 Leaders' Summit on November 15 and 16," the press release said.

In India, Yellen will underscore the strength of the US-India bilateral partnership. She will meet with technology sector leaders and visit the Microsoft India Development Center.

"The Secretary will then hold a bilateral meeting with Indian Minister of Finance and Minister of Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman. Following the US-India Economic and Financial Partnership (EFP) dialogue, the Secretary will join Minister Sitharaman for a fireside discussion with executives from major Indian companies and American companies operating in India," the release added.

They will also sign a joint statement on the Economic and Financial Partnership dialogue.

"In Bali on November 12, Secretary Yellen will represent the United States at the G20 Joint Finance and Health Ministers' Meeting. On November 13, the Secretary will participate in an event celebrating the launch of the Pandemic Fund," the Treasury said.

From November 15-16, Secretary Yellen will join President Joe Biden in rallying a global coalition to "hold Russia accountable" for the conflict in Ukraine, according to the release.

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Nearly 90% of Americans Worry About Increased Risk of Political Violence – Poll

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) – The vast majority of Americans, 88%, are concerned that there is an increased risk of politically-motivated violence in the US, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll released Friday.

Of this group, more than 60% said they were "very concerned," and slightly more of them blamed the Republican Party (31%) more than the Democratic Party (25%) for the risk. The remaining 32% blamed both parties equally.

Last week, the FBI and other US government agencies warned of an increased risk of violence from domestic extremists toward a broad range of targets, including ideological opponents and election workers, in the 90 days following this month's midterm elections.

The poll was conducted with 1,005 adults from October 31 to November 2, in the week following a home intruder's attack on Paul Pelosi, husband of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, with a hammer.

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IMF Sees Potential for China to Further Open Up Domestic Markets - Georgieva

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) – The International Monetary Fund sees a potential for China to further open up its domestic markets, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Friday.

"For China, there is room to further open up domestic markets, deepen reforms of state-owned enterprises," Georgieva said in remarks at the opening ceremony of the 5th China International Import Expo.

Beijing can also ensure competitive neutrality with private firms and improve the protection of intellectual property rights, she added.

"These efforts will be good for China—for the economic wellbeing of the Chinese people—and they are good for the world," the IMF chief said.

Georgieva also noted that reforms that would improve resource allocation between different firms in China could increase productivity by around 6%.

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IMF Says Restrictions, Subsidies Put Global Trade System at 'Severe' Risk of Fragmentation

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) – The global trading system is facing severe challenges from various restrictions and "distortionary" subsidies that drive economic fragmentation, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Friday.

"Today, the global trading system is under severe threat. Trade restrictions and distortionary subsidies are on the rise. A particular priority is rolling back food-related trade restrictions, which drive up global prices and food insecurity. In other words: rather than being a source of growth and integration, trade policy risks becoming a source of economic fragmentation—which hurts all countries," Georgieva said in remarks at the opening ceremony of the 5th China International Import Expo.



Georgieva urged the international community to protect and promote trade openness both inside specific countries and globally through the World Trade Organization.

She also warned of significant risks that may threaten Asia's economy.

"If the world—and our trade—were to divide into two blocs, we estimate permanent annual losses of 1.5 percent of GDP globally, with losses over 3 percent of GDP in Asia and Pacific countries, reflecting the key role trade plays in the region," she said.

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US October Jobs Growth Overshoots Forecasts by Almost 35%, Adding to Fed's Inflation-Fight

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - US employers added 261,000 jobs in October, almost 35% above economists' expectations, according to a Labor Department report on Friday that kept the Federal Reserve on its toes in its fight against inflation.

"Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 261,000 in October, and the unemployment rate rose to 3.7 percent," the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a unit within the Labor Department, said in a news release. An unemployment rate of 4.0% or below is defined by the Fed as maximum employment.

Economists polled by US media had forecast a jobs growth of 195,000 in October and unemployment rate of 3.6%, versus September's 3.5%. While the Fed is also mandated to ensure maximum employment among Americans, it has said that runaway jobs and wages growth were among the main contributors to inflation trending at four-decade highs.

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Blinken Discusses Russia-Ukraine Conflict, Iran With French, German, UK Counterparts

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met on Friday in Germany with his French, German and UK counterparts, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

"They discussed continued Transatlantic cooperation on a number of key issues, including consistent support for Ukraine in the face of Russia's brutal war of aggression," Price said in a press release.

The four ministers also exchanged views on Tehran's alleged military support of Russia and human rights violations in Iran, the release added.

Blinken is in Germany from November 3-4 for the G7 foreign ministers' meeting.

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## Navajo Leader Says US Should Use Some Ukraine Aid Funds to Address Needs of Tribes

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - US federal leaders should consider spending some of the billions of dollars in Ukraine security assistance to address the needs of Native American tribes instead, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez told Sputnik.

"Also there's a lot of needs within this country as well, especially in Indian country, and so we also remind our federal leaders that some of those resources can be used right here in the United States within tribal communities," Nez said regarding US aid sent to Ukraine.

Moreover, the Navajo nation would like the federal government to streamline the process to utilize funding from the American Rescue Plan and the Inflation Reduction Act so that the tribe can immediately work on projects to improve members' access to electricity, water, and broadband telecommunications, Nez said.

US lawmakers reportedly want to try to approve an additional \$50 billion assistance package for Ukraine before the end of the year following the US midterm elections on November 8.

In May, Congress approved a \$40 billion emergency military and humanitarian aid package for Ukraine. In total, the US has committed over \$18.5 billion in military assistance to the country since January 2021.

The Navajo Nation, which is the largest Native American tribe in the United States, has always supported democracy and supports pushing back against any threat to democracy, Nez said.

Nez highlighted the vital role Navajo code talkers served during World War 2, the number of Navajo members serving in the US armed forces, and the uranium that has been extracted from their homelands to help build weapons.

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## Navajo Leader Says Worried Republican-Controlled Congress Would Fail to Meet Tribal Needs

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - Navajo President Jonathan Nez told Sputnik that he is concerned a Republican-controlled Congress will be too focused on political banter against Democrats instead of addressing the needs of the United States and Native American tribes.

US voters head to the polls for midterm elections on November 8 to determine who controls Congress, with Republicans poised to seize the House from the Democrats while the Senate struggle is expected to come down to the wire.

"A lot of these candidates, if they're successful in Congress, either Senate or Representative, they're going to be pushing back on elections and also not holding people accountable for even the Capitol insurgents," Nez said about possibility that Republicans control Congress after the midterms. "So I think if that happens a lot of attention will go to that and not enough attention to the real needs of this country, including in Native American communities."

Republicans, if they win, are expected to seek cuts in funding to Ukraine in order to address US economic problems.

Some Republicans have even called for impeaching Biden.



Moreover, Republicans are expected to launch investigations into the Biden administration's border policies, the chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021, Hunter Biden's business dealings, among other dilemmas.

Thirty-five of the 100 seats in the US Senate and all 435 House seats are up for election this year, in addition to state and local positions. The Democrats currently control the House of Representatives by eight seats while the Senate is split 50-50 with Vice President Kamala Harris representing the tie-breaking vote in her role as president of the upper chamber.

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RPT - Ex-Lehman Brothers Executive Says De-Dollarization Possible Within Next 20 to 30 Years

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - Global de-dollarization is possible within the next 20 to 30 years but the currency is enjoying its peak years at the moment, former Lehman Brothers executive Lawrence McDonald told Sputnik.

"It's definitely going to happen," McDonald said. "It's not a near term problem, maybe 20 to 30 because the US has so much wealth, we've got a lot of military power, but there's no question. The peak dollar best years are right about here."

McDonald, who served as the vice president of distressed debt and convertible securities trading at Lehman Brothers, pointed out that the weaponization of the SWIFT financial system may harm the US dollar's dominance by pushing banks to other substitutes.

"The sanctions-SWIFT game should be used by the West once every 10 years, but they've been using this against multiple countries," McDonald said. "Sanctions against Russia in a war, okay, that's fine. From a US perspective the problem is you've hit 10 different countries over the head with the sanctions card, so you're forcing these countries to form a bloc against you. That's what's happening."

Two years from now the US dollar is going to probably be much lower because countries and banks will be searching for ways around SWIFT, McDonald said.

China's Charge d'Affaires to Russia Sun Weidong said last week that switching to payments in national currencies in Russian-Chinese trade is speeding up the process of global de-dollarization.

Moscow has repeatedly pointed out that Washington's sanctions policy undermines confidence in the dollar, reduces national reserves investment in the US public debt, and contributes to increasing the volume of foreign trade in rubles and other currencies.

At the same time, the Russian authorities have maintained that the de-dollarization policy does not entail a ban on dollar circulation, but rather creates economically beneficial conditions for the use of other currencies.

McDonald is co-author with Patrick Robinson of "A Colossal Failure of Common Sense," which is about the fall of Lehman Brothers and the 2008 financial crisis.

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RPT - US Gave Saudis, Russians Control of Oil Price by Taking Rigs Offline - Ex-Lehman Executive

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - The United States gave Saudi Arabia and the Russians control over the price of oil in the global market when it reduced domestic energy production, former Lehman Brothers executive Lawrence McDonald told Sputnik.

In early October, OPEC+ unanimously agreed to decrease oil production by 2 million barrels per day starting in November in response to uncertainty in global energy markets, ignoring the United States request to delay cuts.

"The US has handed more control over the price to the Saudis and the Russians," McDonald said. "[The United States] We've taken hundreds and hundreds of rigs offline and we've given more production power and control over the price to the Saudis and Russians. Not a very smart thing."

McDonald served as the vice president of distressed debt and convertible securities trading at Lehman Brothers, which collapsed during the financial crisis in 2008.

The Saudis are bold to push back against the United States and it's a bold move, but OPEC+ countries have their own economic models and reasons to cut production, including concerns about further coronavirus-related lockdowns in China that will decrease demand, McDonald said.

"The global economy is crashing," McDonald said.

The United States sustained a self-inflicted wound when it decreased domestic oil production between 2019 to 2021, from a peak of 13 million barrels a day to a low 10 million barrels a day, McDonald said.

"I want to be clear, that's coming back, US production is coming back, but bottom line is that when you cut production that much, you hand more control over the price to the Saudis and Russians," McDonald said.

US oil production has been increasing throughout 2022, but has only reached a high of about 11.9 million barrels per day in August, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

"We should be pumping 16 million barrels a day today," McDonald said. "If we were pumping 16 million barrels a day, the Saudis and the Russians would not have, they wouldn't have the ability to cut production the way they are because the US would steal more market share."

Since 2021, energy prices have been surging worldwide as the global economy rebooted after the pandemic. The growth increased after the European Union and other Western states imposed sanctions on Russian oil and gas, disrupting supply chains amid surging demand. A price cap on Russian seaborne oil, suggested by the G7 and expected to be implemented in December, and the decision by OPEC+ to curb production also strained the already tense global energy situation.

McDonald is co-author with Patrick Robinson of "A Colossal Failure of Common Sense," which is about the fall of Lehman Brothers and the 2008 financial crisis.



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RPT - Fed Pushing Fund Rate to 5% May Trigger Event Like 2008 Financial Crisis - Ex-Lehman Exec

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - Potentially increasing the US federal fund rate to 5% may trigger an economic collapse comparable to the 2008 financial crisis, former Lehman Brothers executive Lawrence McDonald told Sputnik.

The Fed on Wednesday raised rates by 75 basis points in a fourth straight rate increase of that magnitude. The sixth rate hike of the year effectively brought rates to a peak of 400 basis points from just 25 in March. The central bank said rates had to be "sufficiently restrictive" to bring inflation down to its 2% objective over the medium term.

The Federal Open Market Committee anticipates the target rate for the federal fund rate to be about 4.4% by the end of 2022, up from 3.4% projected by the committee in June, as it tightens monetary policy to try to rein in inflation.

"It's pretty clear that financial stability risks are overpowering the inflation fight for now, and so they're trying to avoid another Lehman Brothers, because bottom line is if you move the Fed funds rate to 5%, I think it guarantees you some type of Lehman events, it's too much leverage," McDonald served as the vice president of distressed debt and convertible securities trading at Lehman Brothers, which collapsed during the financial crisis in 2008.

The Fed's target for inflation is a mere 2% a year and it has said it will not back off on interest rate hikes until it achieves its aim.

Investors, economists and business leaders have warned for a while that the US economy was on the verge of a downturn - just two-and-a-half years after the last recession that broke out with the coronavirus pandemic measures in mid-2020.

McDonald is co-author with Patrick Robinson of "A Colossal Failure of Common Sense," which is about the fall of Lehman Brothers and the 2008 financial crisis.

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RPT - US Sanctions on Russia Dangerous, Push Nations Into Bloc - Ex-Lehman Executive

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - The United States' efforts to isolate Russia with sanctions appear to be pushing nations into a bloc, former Lehman Brothers executive Lawrence McDonald told Sputnik.

"They're trying to, yeah, but Russia is going around them through a lot of different avenues, like through China," McDonald said when asked if US sanctions against Russia are effective. "The BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] are essentially forming this - look at the way the Saudis and the Russians are cooperating - the BRICS are forming like an alliance

around the United States. Very dangerous moves the United States makes, they're pushing these countries together as a bloc."

Russia's central bank was proactive in terms of preparing for the US sanctions, McDonald said. Western countries have imposed several packages of sanctions on Russia, including its energy sector, since the start of the special military operation in Ukraine on February 24. Disruption in supply chains has led to higher fuel and food prices across the EU and the United States, driving inflation to record levels and causing cost of living to soar.

In an effort to rein in surging energy prices, the Group of Seven is planning to set a price cap on crude Russian oil and refined products coming from Russia, urging other countries to join in. The recent OPEC+ decision to cut oil production, however, may reportedly delay the plan, media reported. The alliance's move has also further strained US-Saudi relationship, with Washington accusing Riyadh of partnering up with Russia.

In October, following the visit to Saudi Arabia, President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa said that Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud had expressed Riyadh's desire to join BRICS.

Russian Ambassador to Turkey Alexei Yerkhov said in an interview with the Turkish newspaper Dunya published on Monday that the West is also trying to force Turkey to join the sanctions against Russia using any means, including blackmail.

McDonald is co-author with Patrick Robinson of "A Colossal Failure of Common Sense," which is about the fall of Lehman Brothers and the 2008 financial crisis.

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RPT - Biden Misjudged Energy Crisis, Dems Will Lose Congress in Midterms - Ex-Lehman Executive

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration misjudged the current energy crisis and Democrats are expected to lose control of Congress in the midterm elections, former Lehman Brothers executive Lawrence McDonald told Sputnik.

US voters head to the polls for midterm elections on November 8 to determine who controls Congress, with Republicans poised to seize the House from the Democrats while the Senate struggle is expected to come down to the wire.

"They're gonna lose the House, they're probably going to lose the Senate and then we go into gridlock," McDonald said. "That's why bonds are starting to rally here, because it's going to be just massive gridlock for a couple of years."

McDonald, who served as the vice president of distress debt and convertible securities trading at Lehman Brothers, said the Biden administration misjudged the energy crisis and failed to secure US energy independence.

"When they [Democrats] took office, they attack the oil industry, there was like 12 to 18 months where there was no investment at all and now we're under invested," McDonald said. "We don't have the resources on the ground to get enough oil out to satisfy demand and the entire administration has misjudged the energy crisis."



Since 2021, energy prices have been surging worldwide as the global economy rebooted after the pandemic. The growth increased after the European Union and other Western states imposed sanctions on Russian oil and gas, disrupting supply chains amid surging demand. A price cap on Russian seaborne oil, suggested by the G7 and expected to be implemented in December, and the decision by OPEC+ to curb production also strained the already tense global energy situation.

McDonald is co-author with Patrick Robinson of "A Colossal Failure of Common Sense," which is about the fall of Lehman Brothers and the 2008 financial crisis.

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RPT - Russian Central Bank Was Proactive Getting Ahead of West's Sanctions - Ex-Lehman Executive

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - Russia's central bank was proactive in preparing its financial system for additional sanctions from the United States and its allies, former Lehman Brothers executive Lawrence McDonald told Sputnik.

Western countries have imposed several packages of sanctions on Russia, including its energy sector, since the start of the special military operation in Ukraine on February 24.

"Russian Central Bank policy... overall, they were pretty well ahead of this," McDonald said regarding the impact Western sanctions have had on Russia. "The central bank was pretty proactive in terms of getting ahead."

McDonald, who served as the vice president of distressed debt and convertible securities trading at Lehman Brothers, explained that Russia's central bank bought a lot of gold and sold a lot of treasuries to strengthen its financial system against sanctions.

"Russia [has] a lot more hard assets per capita than Western countries, and hard assets do well in inflationary regimes," McDonald said.

Western sanctions have caused disruptions in several supply chains, which have led to higher fuel and food prices across the European Union and the United States, driving inflation to record levels and causing cost of living to soar.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said earlier this week that Russia had faced sanctions before and the experience it had gained over the decades prepared it to successfully overcome the challenge.

Russia, the minister added, has many friends in all regions of the world, including countries of the former Soviet Union, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America, and it does not cut itself off from business partners in Europe and North America. He also noted that breaking mutually beneficial ties has never been the choice of the Russian government.

McDonald is co-author with Patrick Robinson of "A Colossal Failure of Common Sense," which is about the fall of Lehman Brothers and the 2008 financial crisis.

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RPT - Ex-Lehman Executive Says Rate Hikes, Trillions in World Debt May 'Blow Up Lots of Things'

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - Former Lehman Brothers executive Lawrence McDonald warned that constant rate hikes when there's too much national debt across the world may lead to drastic consequences.

The Fed on Wednesday raised rates by 75 basis points for a fourth straight time in November. The sixth rate hike of the year effectively brought rates to a peak of 400 basis points from just 25 in March. The central bank said rates had to be "sufficiently restrictive" to bring inflation down to its 2% objective over the medium term.

Inflation has hit 40-year highs, driving the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates significantly throughout the course of the year. The US inflation rate, currently running at 8.2%, is one of the top issues on voters' minds going into the November 8 midterm elections, according to polls.

"When you hike rates today, it's extreme, it's much more dangerous than 20 years ago because there's 200 trillion more debt today on the planet," McDonald said. "So with just too much debt, when you hike rates, it really blows up a lot of things."

McDonald, who served as the vice president of distressed debt and convertible securities trading at Lehman Brothers, suggested avoiding over 300 basis points in rate hikes in six months on a US economy that is massively leveraged.

Last month, US national debt reached a new historical milestone as it topped \$31 trillion for the first time in history, according to US Treasury Department data.

Moreover, McDonald said the United States is pretty much already in a recession.

"The only metric that hasn't gone into inflation territory is jobs, and there's a lot of reasons behind that: it's a big summer driving season, there's a lot of people that come back to the labor force, but things are really slowing down hard," McDonald said.

The Fed on Wednesday raised rates by 75 basis points, the fourth straight rate increase of that magnitude. The sixth rate hike of the year effectively brought rates to a peak of 400 basis points from just 25 in March, as the US central bank keeps to a series of interest rate increases to get inflation back to its target of 2% per year.

Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, stood at 8.2% during the year to September, not too far from the 40-year peak of 9.1% noted in the 12 months to June.

McDonald is co-author with Patrick Robinson of "A Colossal Failure of Common Sense," which is about the fall of Lehman Brothers and the 2008 financial crisis.

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RECAST - Russian Embassy to Issue Complaint to US Over Prison Meeting With Vinnik - Antonov



WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - The Russian Embassy in the United States plans to issue a complaint to the US government over their failure to provide adequate conditions during the meeting with Russian citizen Alexander Vinnik in a prison in California, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov told reporters.

Earlier on Thursday, Antonov visited Vinnik at the prison in San Francisco where he is being detained.

"I will come to Washington, we will write to the State Department and I will express my negative attitude to my colleagues from the White House. We have a written consent to have a contact with our compatriot, we consider the situation that has happened now simply unacceptable," Antonov said on Thursday.

Despite the long and difficult coordination through the State Department and the White House, the prison administration did not allow Vinnik to meet Russian diplomats in the same room, forcing them to talk through a glass window, Antonov said.

The US government accuses Vinnik of financial crimes, including money laundering through his cryptocurrency trading platform BTC-e. Prosecutors allege the platform enabled criminal activity by obscuring and anonymizing transactions and sources of funds. Vinnik denies the charges against him.

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Russian Embassy will complain to US officials Over prison meeting with Vinnik - Antonov

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Canada Parliament Hears 2022 Fall Economic Statement From Finance Minister Freeland

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - Canada's Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland presented the government's 2022 Fall Economic Statement to lawmakers in Parliament.

The economic overview said that global growth is expected to slow and the risks for a global recession have significantly increased.

Nevertheless, the government has changed its forecast for Canada's GDP deficit to 1.3% instead of the 2% projected earlier.

"In April, we committed to bringing the deficit down to just 2 per cent of GDP this year. Today, we forecast it will be just 1.3 per cent of our \$2.8 trillion dollar economy," Freeland told the lawmakers in Parliament on Thursday.

Freeland pointed out that the Canadian economy is 103% bigger than it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, marking an economic growth that is among the biggest among the G7 member states.

Inflation stands at 6.8% this year and will steadily decrease to 3.5% in 2023 to finally achieve 2.1% between 2024 and 2026, the review said.

Earlier in the day, the Canadian government announced that it will permanently eliminate all interest on federal student loans starting next April, with the decision only pending Royal Assent.

In addition, the government said it intends to enter negotiations with the payment card industry in a bid to reduce credit card transaction fees for Canadian small businesses.

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'Russophobic Consensus' in US Congress Will Not Change After Midterms - Antonov  
(Adds details in paras 4-7)

SAN FRANCISCO, November 4 (Sputnik) - The Russophobic consensus in the US Congress will not change after the midterm elections, however, Moscow is ready to work with Washington, Russian Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Antonov told reporters.

"It would be naive to expect something good, that on November 9 after finalizing the results, the doors will open and they will be glad to see Russian diplomats or the Russian ambassador on the Capitol Hill," Antonov said. "Whoever wins the election, this Russophobic consensus will remain."

Moscow is ready for a change, he added, and has no problem resuming contacts along any line, but Russia "will not run after the Americans, beg them, let's meet, let's talk."

"We are ready to talk only on an equal footing, only when Russian national interests are taken into account. It will never be otherwise," he said.



Antonov said this consensus in Congress hinders parliamentary relations in any form. "It is allegedly impossible to talk to us. Moreover, all deputies and all senators are on sanctions lists, they don't even want to talk to them through non-governmental organizations. This is rather sad," Antonov said.

He stated that he tried to establish contacts with the leadership of the Senate and the lower house, but there was either no answer at all or there was no indication that in the current conditions such contacts are not needed by the United States.

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Paul Pelosi Released From Hospital After Surgery for Hammer Attack Injuries - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - Paul Pelosi, husband of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, was released from hospital after undergoing treatment for injuries sustained during an alleged hammer attack at his residence last week, CNN reported.

Pelosi was released from the hospital after recovering from surgery to treat a skull fracture and arm injuries, the report said on Thursday, citing a source familiar with the matter.

Pelosi is now resting at home and a formal health update from the family is expected soon, the report said.

On Friday, Pelosi was allegedly attacked by 42-year old David DePape after officers found the two men struggling over a hammer in the Pelosi residence in San Francisco.

DePape pleaded not guilty to state-level charges, including attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon and elder abuse.

DePape faces federal charges of assault and attempted kidnapping of a US official or their family member with intent to retaliate on account of their duties.

The suspect is being held without bail ahead of a Friday court session to schedule a preliminary and bail hearing, which are likely to be set in conjunction, defense attorney Adam Lipson said on Tuesday after DePape's arraignment.

Earlier on Thursday, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) said DePape is a Canadian citizen who is illegally residing in the United States. DePape will be deported from the United States following the resolution of the criminal cases against him, DHS added.

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#### G7 Nations Agree to Set Fixed Price on Russian Oil Upon Concluding Cap Deal - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) - The member nations of the Group of Seven (G7) nations and Australia have agreed to set a fixed instead of a floating price for Russian oil upon concluding the price cap deal later in November, while the initial price has not yet been set, the US media reported.

"The coalition has agreed the price cap will be a fixed price that will be reviewed regularly rather than a discount to an index," Reuters reported on Thursday. "This will increase market stability and simplify compliance to minimize the burden on market participants."

While the initial price has not been set, it is expected to be agreed upon in coming weeks, the report said, citing multiple sources.

In addition, the countries agreed to regularly review the fixed price and revise it as needed, the report cited a source as saying.

In the summer, the countries of the so-called collective West discussed introducing a price cap on Russian oil. On September 2, the G7 finance ministers confirmed their intention to impose a price cap on Russian oil as part of the expansion of sanctions against Moscow. The price cap will be introduced on December 5 for oil and on February 5 for oil products.

In October, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen proposed a \$60 price cap on a barrel of Russian oil. The White House was reviewing the terms of limiting Russian oil prices, planning to soften the conditions for applying restrictions, according to media reports.

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#### SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

WASHINGTON, November 4 (Sputnik) -

#### US-SOUTH KOREA DEFENSE TALKS

\* US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his South Korea counterpart Lee Jong-sup on Thursday issued a joint communique that they have agreed to enhance military exercises and training after North Korea recently conducted missile test launches.

\* The United States has no plans to permanently position new strategic assets on the Korean Peninsula but will rotate equipment in-and-out of the area, Austin said.



\* Any use of nuclear weapons by North Korea on the United States or its allies will result in the end of Kim Jong Un's regime, the US and South Korea said in a joint statement.

#### ATTACK ON FORMER PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER KHAN

\* An unknown person has opened fire at an opposition march in Pakistan led by former Prime Minister and chairman of the Tehreek-e-Insaf party, Imran Khan, near the city of Wazirabad media reported on Thursday.

\* The United Nations strongly condemns the attack on Khan and urges a transparent investigation into the incident, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

\* The United States condemns the assassination attempt on f Khan and wishes a speedy recovery to all those injured in the attack, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said.

#### GLOBAL ENERGY DEVELOPMENTS

\* The Biden administration has awarded the final contract of 15 million barrels from its sale of 180 million barrels of emergency oil from the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), the Department of Energy (DoE) said Thursday.

\* The International Energy Agency (IEA) announced that it expects a 30 billion cubic meters (bcm) gas deficit in Europe next summer, at a key time for filling underground storage facilities, if Russia stops supplies and demand in China rebounds.

\* Europe should refrain from excessive optimism about gas reserves in underground storage facilities and take urgent measures to prepare for next winter, the IEA said.

#### GRAIN EXPORTS AGREEMENT

\* UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on all parties to the grain deal to focus on extending it after Russia resumed its participation in the agreement, while expressing satisfaction at the shipment of 10 million metric tonnes of grain through the Black Sea corridor in just three months.

\* Russia resumed its work at the Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Center (JCC) on Thursday and joined inspections under the grain deal, with eight vessels now transiting the humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea, the UN Secretariat at the JCC said in a statement.

\* The resumption of Russia's participation in the grain deal does not mean it was extended, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, noting that the deal did not expire yet.

\* Moscow still does not see any progress on unblocking the export of Russian fertilizers and grain under the Black Sea Initiative, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

#### NORTH KOREA MISSILE TEST LAUNCHES

\* North Korea could have conducted another missile launch, the Japanese maritime security service said on Thursday.

\* The United States and its allies have requested a UN Security Council meeting for Friday to discuss North Korea's latest missile launches, a UN source told Sputnik.

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Blinken, Egypt Counterpart Discuss Upcoming UN Conference on Climate Change - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry have discussed the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a readout of the discussion on Thursday.

"US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke today with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry in advance of the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) this month in Sharm El-Sheikh," the readout said.

Blinken underscored his appreciation for Egypt's leadership on climate issues and the commitment to further deepen the US-Egypt strategic partnership by achieving tangible progress on human rights in Egypt, the readout said.

The Secretary of State welcomed Egypt's reported release of a significant numbers of political detainees over the past several months and expressed support for more such releases and pardons, the readout added.

Blinken and Shoukry also discussed joint efforts to advance peace in the region, according to the readout.

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New York Supreme Court Judge Orders Monitor in Trump Financial Records Lawsuit - Filing

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - New York Supreme Court Justice Arthur Engoron ordered an independent monitor to oversee the submission of financial records related to a lawsuit against former US President Donald Trump and others involved in the Trump Organization for alleged financial fraud, according to a court document filed on Thursday. New York State Attorney General Letitia James alleges that Trump and other defendants, including children Ivanka and Eric Trump, engaged in extensive acts of fraud in the preparation and submission of Trump's annual financial statements.

The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) requested an independent monitor to oversee the submission of certain financial information pending final disposition of the lawsuit, a request opposed by Trump's attorneys.

"Upon the foregoing documents, and after oral argument held on November 3, 2022, it is hereby ordered that plaintiff's motion for a preliminary injunction and appointment of an independent monitor is granted as detailed herein," Engoron said in the filing.

The monitor will oversee the submission of information provided for year 2022 financial statements, the submission of financial disclosures to lenders and insurers and any corporate restructuring or disposition of significant assets, the filing said.

The court will appoint a monitor from names recommended by OAG and the defendants, who have until November 10 to identify no more than three potential candidates for consideration, the filing said.



The parties will then have until November 15 to comment on the other side's selections, the filing also said.

The defendants are required to pay for the independent monitor, the filing added.

The parties are set to attend a preliminary conference on November 22.

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Canada's GDP Deficit Is Forecasted to be 1.3% instead of 2% Expected in April - Freeland

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The Canadian government has changed its forecast for the country's GDP deficit to 1.3% instead of the expected 2% in April, Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said on Thursday.

"In April, we committed to bringing the deficit down to just 2% of GDP this year. Today, we forecast, it will be just 1.3% of our \$2.8 trillion economy," Freeland told Parliament.

Freeland is in Parliament to present lawmakers with the federal government's economic statement for the fall of 2022.

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Canada Permanently Eliminates Interest on Federal Student Loans - Finance Minister

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The Canadian government is permanently removing interest on federally emitted student loans, Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland said on Thursday.

"We are permanently eliminating interest on the federal portion of Canada Student Loans," Freeland told lawmakers in Parliament.

Freeland is in Parliament to present lawmakers with the federal government's economic statement for the fall of 2022.

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FBI Newark Branch Says Received Credible Information About Threat to New Jersey Synagogues

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The FBI urges the public to stay alert because it received credible information about threats to synagogues in the US state of New Jersey, the agency's Newark office said on Thursday.

"The FBI has received credible information of a broad threat to synagogues in New Jersey," FBI Newark office said. "We ask at this time that you take all security precautions to protect your community and facility. We will share more information as soon as we can."

The FBI Newark office called on the public to stay alert and call the police in case of an emergency.

The alert was issued as a proactive measure while investigative processes are carried out, the FBI Newark office said.

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Amazon Founder Jeff Bezos Considering Purchase of Washington Commanders NFL Team - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - Founder and former CEO of Amazon Jeff Bezos is considering buying the Washington Commanders National Football League (NFL) team with possible co-investment by rapper Jay-Z, People reported on Thursday.

Bezos, former richest man in the world, is interested in bidding on the American football team after current owners Dan and Tanya Snyder expressed interest in possibly selling the organization, the report said, citing a source close to the billionaire.

The purchase may be made in partnership with Jay-Z, the source also reportedly said.

Bezos has strong support within the NFL to eventually join its ranks as an owner, the source added.

The Washington Commanders are currently ranked fourth in the league's eastern conference, holding a record of 4-4 in the ongoing season.

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US Embassy in Romania Helps Free American Woman From Human Trafficking - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - Diplomatic Security Service (DSS) personnel at the US Embassy in Bucharest worked alongside Romanian law enforcement to free an American woman and one other victim of human trafficking, the State Department said on Thursday.

Earlier this year, a US citizen informed the embassy that a friend was being held against their will in Romania, sparking a response by investigators, DSS Special Agent Joshua Vincent said in an official State Department report.

DSS received screenshots of messages from the victim's friend that identified her location and circumstances to use as evidence in the case, Vincent said.

"DSS shared the evidence with the Romanian Police who obtained an arrest warrant and conducted searches alongside DSS personnel. After an exhaustive search, they recovered the American woman and one other woman being held against their will," Vincent said.



The two human trafficking victims were released within a matter of hours, Vincent added. Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Shane Dixon commended the teamwork between embassy personnel and Romanian police to rescue the two women, according to the report. The Biden administration's National Action Plan identifies DSS as an integral partner in combatting human trafficking, exemplified by this recent rescue, Dixon said.

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US Sanctions 6 Persons, 17 Entities, 11 Vessels Over Support for IRGC, Hezbollah -Treasury

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The United States has imposed sanctions against six individuals, 17 entities and 11 vessels over their alleged support for Hezbollah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force, the US Department of the Treasury said in a release on Thursday.

"Today, the US Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated members of an international oil smuggling network that facilitated oil trades and generated revenue for Hezbollah and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF)," the release said.

The Treasury Department explained in the release that the designated network includes a number of persons, front companies and vessels.

"Viktor Artemov, Edman Nafrieh, Rouzbeh Zahedi and Mohamed El Zein leveraged dozens of companies under their control to conduct the network's illicit activities," the release said. "The network used storage units in the Port of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates and blended products of Indian origin with Iranian oil to obfuscate the Iranian origin. The companies then modified or created counterfeit certificates of origin and quality for the blended oil, which was then transferred for sale abroad."

Iranian national Edman Nafrieh oversaw the network and received orders from high-ranking Iranian officials associated with the sanctioned Supreme Leader's Office, while Rouzbeh Zahedi helped transport the Iranian oil abroad, the release said.

"Zahedi used his companies to transfer funds to IRGC-QF and Hezbollah members and coordinated activities closely with Mohamed El Zein (El Zein), a Hezbollah member who was also part of the oil smuggling network and the son of a high-ranking Hezbollah communications director," the release said. "El Zein used forged invoices for consulting and shipping services from shell companies to hide the origin of financial transactions."

The Treasury Department said that Viktor Artemov also oversees much of the network and used his companies to buy and sell oil tankers that were then used to transport blended Iranian oil on behalf of the oil smuggling network.

"Artemov also planned oil sales to Asia-based buyers as of late 2021 with Muhammad Ibrahim Bazzi, a key Hezbollah financier who was designated by OFAC in May 2018 for providing material support to Hezbollah," the release said.

The designated shipping companies owned, controlled or directed by Artemov include Ava Petroleum Services S.A., Petro Naviero Pte Ltd., Centrum Maritime Pte Ltd., Energotrade Plus DMCC, Intrepid Navigators SA and Rising Tide Shipping Corp.

The latest sanctions target several shipping management companies and vessels, including Monumont Ship Management Ltd., Harbour Ship Management Ltd., Expanse Ship Management Ltd. and Blue Berri Shipping, for having provided Artemov financial, material or technological support for goods or services.

The Treasury's latest sanctions also target Tatiana Ryabikova, an employee of Artemov, and Ava Petroleum CEO Gregorio Fazzone.

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#### US Condemns Attack on Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan - White House

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The United States condemns the assassination attempt on former Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and wishes a speedy recovery to all those injured in the attack, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Thursday.

"The United States strongly condemns the attack on Imran Khan and his supporters, and hopes for the swift recovery of all who were injured. Violence has no place in politics. We call on all parties to remain peaceful and refrain from violence," Jean-Pierre said during a press briefing. Earlier on Thursday, an unknown person opened fire at an opposition march near the city of Wazirabad in the province of Punjab, according to media reports.

Khan, who led the march, was reportedly shot in the leg and several others were also injured. One Tehreek-e-Insaf party worker was killed in the shooting, Pakistan's newspaper Dawn reported. The shooter was detained by authorities, the report said.

The failed assassination attempt was condemned by current Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and President Arif Alvi. Sharif said the Punjab provincial government will be provided with assistance in their investigation of the attack.

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#### UN Condemns Attack on Ex-Pakistan Prime Minister Khan, Urges Transparent Investigation

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The United Nations strongly condemns the attack on former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and urges a transparent investigation into the incident, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Thursday.

"We are obviously very concerned about the reports that... former Prime Minister Khan and others were wounded today during a rally," Dujarric said during a press briefing. "We condemn the strongest possible term any violence against politicians or their supporters."



The UN spokesperson urged for a full and transparent investigation into the incident amid the tense political situation in Pakistan.

"We very much hope that this will not create further challenges in the political situation in Pakistan," Dujarric said.

Earlier on Thursday, Khan was shot in the leg during a campaign event in the city of Wazirabad. On October 21, Pakistan's elections commission banned Khan from holding public office for five years for the alleged illegal sale of state gifts and concealment of income during his term. Khan has insisted that he had been overthrown by a United States-sponsored coup and that enemy agents in government still impede his vision for Pakistan.

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Artemis Unmanned Moon Mission on Schedule to Launch November 14 - NASA Officials

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The repeatedly delayed first unmanned lunar mission of the Artemis 1 system is still on current schedule to be launched on November 14, NASA said on Thursday.

"The agency continues to target launch for Monday, Nov. 14, with liftoff planned during a 69-minute launch window that opens at 12:07 am EST (Eastern Standard Time)," NASA said in a press release. "A launch on November 14 would result in a mission duration of about 25-and-a-half days with a splashdown in the Pacific Ocean Friday, December 9."

Backup dates for the launch in case of delays due to weather considerations or other reasons are November 16 and November 19, NASA Exploration Systems Development Mission Associate Administrator Jim Free told reporters at a press conference at Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Free pointed out that the problems encountered previously with leaks from the hydrogen valve been resolved.

"There is not really a smoking gun," Freed said.

Artemis 1, which combines the 70 metric ton Space Launch System rocket and the Orion spacecraft, will start rolling out of the Vehicle Assembly Building after midnight tonight, Free said.

The uncrewed mission will send the Orion spacecraft beyond the Moon and back to Earth, Free added.

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Trump Considering Launching New White House Bid After Midterms - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump is considering launching a new White House bid after the November 8 midterm elections, Reuters reported on Thursday, citing an adviser.

"I think like a moth to a flame, Trump will run in 2024. I think that he wants to run and announcing before Thanksgiving gives him a great advantage over his opponents and he understands that," the adviser said on condition of anonymity.

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US Not Planning to Permanently Deploy New Strategic Assets to Korean Peninsula - Austin

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The United States has no plans to permanently position new strategic assets on the Korean Peninsula but will rotate equipment in-and-out of the area, US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Thursday.

"We don't have a plan to change our permanent positioning or stationing of assets on the peninsula currently," Austin said during a press briefing. "No new deployment of strategic assets on a permanent basis, but you'll see assets move in and out on a routine basis."

The statement came following the 54th US-South Korea Security Consultative Meeting between Austin and his South Korean counterpart Lee Jong-sup. The annual meeting took place amid a recent spree of missile test launches by North Korea, including the launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

Austin said the United States is committed to preventing the use of nuclear weapons and maintains an effective deterrence. Washington is not planning to redeploy nuclear assets to the Korean Peninsula, Austin added.

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US Proposing Alternative Ways Forward With Russia on Possible Prisoner Swap - White House

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration continues to follow up with Russia about its prisoner swap offer for US citizens Brittney Griner and Paul Whelan and is proposing alternative ways forward on this issue, White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre said on Thursday.

"I can also tell you that in the subsequent weeks despite a lack of good faith negotiation by the Russians, the US government has continued to follow up on that offer and propose alternative potential ways forward with Russians through all available channels," Jean-Pierre said.

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S. Korea, US Defense Chiefs Agree to Enhance Combined Exercises, Training - Communique

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his South Korea counterpart Lee Jong-sup on Thursday issued a joint communique that they have agreed to enhance military exercises and training after North Korea recently conducted missile test launches.

"The Secretary and Minister concurred on the need to enhance combined exercises and training events to strengthen readiness against DPRK [North Korea] nuclear and missile threats, particularly given the security environment following the DPRK's most recent missile tests," the joint communique said.

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Health Canada Greenlights Moderna COVID-19 Booster for Omicron BA.4/5 Variants - statement

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) – Canada has greenlighted the use of a Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 booster shot for Omicron BA.4/5 variants, the country's health authority said on Thursday.

"Today, Health Canada authorized an adapted version of the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine that targets the Omicron BA.4/BA.5 subvariants. It is authorized for use as a booster dose in individuals 18 years of age or older," Health Canada's statement said.

The decision to authorize the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 booster shot, comes after a "thorough and independent scientific review" of the provided evidence to Health Canada, the statement adds, saying it was found to be safe and effective.

On October 7, Health Canada approved the use of a Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 booster which also targets the BA.4/5 Omicron variants.

Health Canada continues to recommend that citizens stay up to date with their vaccines, stressing that it is the most effective protection tool against COVID-19-related illnesses, hospitalization, and consequent death.

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Russia, China Obligated to Uphold UNSC Resolutions on N. Korean Proliferation - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - Russia and China have an obligation to uphold UN Security Council resolutions targeting the proliferation of weapon systems by North Korea, Gonzalo Suarez, US Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Security at the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation, said on Thursday.



"The threat of proliferation by North Korea is a concern for a range of countries. There have been multiple UN Security Council resolutions specifically targeting North Korean proliferation that all UN member states have an obligation to uphold. Russia is not exempt from that obligation, neither is China," Suarez said during a press briefing.

It would be useful if Russia and China were to play more active roles in preventing North Korean proliferation, Suarez added.

Earlier Thursday, North Korea conducted three ballistic missile test launches, one of which may have been intercontinental. The launches came just one day after North Korea fired at least 23 missiles and 100 rounds of artillery toward the Yellow Sea and Sea of Japan.

North Korea claims the tests are carried out in response to "provocations" by South Korea, which has been conducting active military exercises both independently and alongside the US and Japan.

The US condemns North Korea's recent launches and underscores the need for all countries to fully implement UNSC resolutions intended to stymie Pyongyang's sourcing of technology and materials needed for their weapon tests, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement.

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Any N. Korean Nuclear Attack on US, Allies to Result in End of Kim Regime- Joint Statement WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - Any use of nuclear weapons by North Korea on the United States or its allies will result in the end of Kim Jong Un's regime, the US and South Korea said in a joint statement on Thursday.

The joint statement came following the 54th US-South Korea Security Consultative Meeting between US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and South Korean National Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup.

"[Austin] noted that any nuclear attack against the United States or its allies and partners, including the use of non-strategic nuclear weapons, is unacceptable and will result in the end of the Kim regime," the joint statement said.

Austin and Lee concurred on the need to bolster readiness against North Korea nuclear and missile threats, including through the newly established Counter-Missile Working Group and reactivated Program Analysis Working Group for US-South Korea Missile Defense, the statement added.

The meeting comes following a series of missile test launches by North Korea in recent days that Pyongyang says were in response to provocative joint exercises between South Korea and the United States.

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US Diplomats Visited Brittney Griner Today - State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - US diplomats visited basketball star Brittney Griner, who is serving a nine-year sentence in Russia on drug charges, on Thursday, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said.

"@USEmbRU officials visited Brittney Griner today. They saw firsthand her tenacity and perseverance despite her present circumstances. We continue to press for the immediate release of Brittney Griner and Paul Whelan and fair treatment for every detained American," Price wrote on social media.

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First NASA Starliner CST-100 Manned Mission Delayed to April 2023 - Boeing

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - NASA and Boeing have delayed the first manned space mission of the CST-100 Starliner by two months from February to April 2023, Boeing announced in a mission update on Thursday.

"The Crew Flight Test (CFT) of Boeing's CST-100 Starliner is now targeted to launch in April 2023, a window Boeing and NASA agree is the optimal timeframe for the International Space Boeing Station visiting vehicle schedule," the update said.

The delay was caused by the need to fit the manned flight into the busy docking schedule of the International Space Station (ISS), Boeing Starliner Program Vice President and Program Manager Mark Nappi said in the update.

"We understand our customer must consider the needs of the International Space Station in scheduling the certification flight of a second US commercial crew transportation system. We are working to have the CFT vehicle ready to fly ahead of the new launch date," Nappi said. A previously flown crew module is still being prepared to be combined with a new service module currently being built for the CFT at Boeing's Commercial Crew and Cargo Processing Facility in Florida, the update said.

NASA astronauts Butch Wilmore, Suni Williams and Mike Fincke are preparing for the mission, it added.

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RPT - US Trade Deficit Widens 1st Time in 6 Months in September as Dollar Jumps - Commerce Dept.

(Repeats to fix para 7)

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The US trade deficit widened for the first time in six months in September as exports lagged imports amid a stronger dollar that weighed on demand for American goods and services, data from the Commerce Department showed Thursday.

After a five-month drop, the US trade deficit widened to \$73.3 billion as an import growth of \$4.8 billion outstripped an exports rise of \$2.8 billion in September.

Exports declined for the first time in eight months, while imports rose for the second time in six months, the Commerce Department data showed.

Import growth was rather broad based across major goods categories in September, with capital goods and consumer goods specifically leading real goods imports higher. Exports were driven lower by food and beverages specifically.

Economists said the trade deficit imports could widen in coming months, depending on the dollar, which has rallied 18% this year against a basket of six major currencies led by the euro after persistent rate hikes by the Federal Reserve trying to curb the worst US inflation in 40 years.

"Imports will likely rebound as further normalization in supply chains supports demand for inputs as does continued domestic demand for end product, exhibited by still strong consumer spending," economists at Wells Fargo said in a note. "Exports, on the other hand, look set to weaken further from here. There are clear signs of economic deceleration abroad, which will weigh on demand. At the same time, the strength of the dollar is making US goods more expensive and less competitive abroad."

The Fed on Wednesday raised rates by 75 basis points in a fourth straight rate increase of that magnitude. The sixth rate hike of the year effectively brought rates to a peak of 400 basis points from just 25 in March.

The central bank said rates had to be "sufficiently restrictive" to bring inflation down to its 2% objective over the medium term. Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, is about four times higher than the Fed's target now — standing at 8.2% during the year to September, after a 40-year peak of 9.1% in the 12 months to June.

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US, Allies Request UNSC Meeting on Friday to Discuss DPRK Missile Launches - Source

UNITED NATIONS, November 3 (Sputnik) - The United States and its allies have requested a UN Security Council meeting for Friday to discuss North Korea's latest missile launches, a UN source told Sputnik.

"The US and some other countries requested a SC meeting on DPRK launches for tomorrow," the source said.

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Parliamentary Secretary to Visit UAE, Lebanon, and Oman - Global Affairs Canada



WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) – The Parliamentary Secretary to the country's Foreign Minister Melanie Joly, Robert Oliphant, will visit the UAE as well as Lebanon and Oman from November 3-11, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) said on Thursday.

"The Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, today announced that the Honourable Robert Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, will visit the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Oman and Lebanon from November 3 to 11, 2022," the GAC news release reads.

While in the UAE, Secretary Oliphant will meet senior Emirati officials in Abu Dhabi, to talk about both countries bilateral priorities, particularly under the framework of the Canada-UAE Joint Committee for Cooperation.

Oliphant's second stop will be in Oman, where a meeting will be held with government representatives to find areas of cooperation and advance both countries agendas on trade and regional security.

The visit will conclude in Lebanon with Oliphant meeting government officials and other groups, to assess the country's situation two years after the tragedy of Beirut port explosion, the release said.

GAC added that Canada is seeking to gain a better understanding of the Lebanese people's needs just as the country faces hardships due to the economic crisis.

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US Treasury Official to Travel to Europe for Talks on Anti-Russia Sanctions, Oil Price Cap

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - US Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo will head to a number of European capitals next week for talks on sanctions imposed on Russia and the implementation of the price cap on Russian oil, the Treasury Department said in a press release on Thursday.

"Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Wally Adeyemo will travel to Paris, France, London, United Kingdom and Brussels, Belgium from November 7th to 9th to continue close coordination with allies on sanctions against Russia for its brutal war against Ukraine," the release said. "In meetings with government counterparts, he will follow up on last month's convening of countries imposing Russia sanctions and export controls to discuss redoubled efforts to deny Putin the revenue and military equipment he needs to further his illegal war."

Adeyemo will also address the maintaining of support for Ukraine through direct economic assistance as well as continue the close coordination on implementing a price cap on Russian oil, the release said.

"In Paris and London, Deputy Secretary Adeyemo will meet with private sector executives to hear their perspectives on sanctions evasion and enforcement, as well as the global spillover effects of Putin's war on higher energy prices and exacerbated food insecurity," the release added.

The countries of the collective West have imposed several rounds of sanctions on Russia since the start of Moscow's special military operation in Ukraine on February 24. The sanctions have

caused disruptions in supply chains, leading to higher fuel and food prices across the European Union and beyond and drove inflation to record levels.

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Five Times More Americans Than in March Say US Doing Too Much to Help Ukraine - Poll

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The number of Americans who consider US aid to Ukraine excessive increased from 6% in March to 30% in October, according to a Wall Street Journal poll.

The findings show that 30% of respondents said the United States is "doing too much" to help Ukraine.

In addition, 37% of respondents oppose providing additional financial assistance to Ukraine, while 57% favor it. On partisan lines, 81% of Democrats said they support additional aid, compared to only 35% of Republicans and 45% of independents.

President Joe Biden recently expressed concern that Republicans could jeopardize future aid for Ukraine after current House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy vowed to cease writing blank checks to Kiev if Republicans get the majority after the November 8 midterms.

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US Awards Final Contract in 180Mln-Barrel US Oil Reserve Sale - Energy Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration has awarded the final contract of 15 million barrels from its sale of 180 million barrels of emergency oil from the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR), the Department of Energy (DoE) said Thursday.

"These contract awards complete the President Biden's announcement on March 31, 2022, to release 180 million barrels of crude oil to address the significant global supply disruption caused by Putin's war on Ukraine, act as a wartime bridge for domestic production to increase, and aid in lowering energy costs for American families," the DoE said in a statement.

A total of 12 companies responded to the latest government sale of SPR oil, submitting 110 bids in all, the DoE said. The department cited six winners: Equinor Marketing & Trading, Macquarie Commodities Trading US LLC, Marathon Petroleum Supply and Trading LLC, Phillips 66 Company, Shell Trading (US) Company and Valero Marketing and Supply Company.

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US Not in Recession as Robust Job Market Holds Up Economy - White House Chief of Staff

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The United States is not in a recession given a robust jobs market holding the economy up despite aggressive interest rate hikes by the Federal Reserve trying to curb the worst inflation in four decades, White House Chief of Staff Ron Klain said on Thursday.

"Look, we are not in a recession; I want to be really, really clear on that," Klain said during an appearance on MSNBC. "Unemployment claims remain at a [near] historical low. The economy is growing. It is strong. It is creating jobs."

The number of Americans filing new claims for unemployment benefits unexpectedly fell last week, standing at around 217,000 versus forecasts for a growth of 220,000. Claims hit a 50-year low of 166,000 in April but have trended at around 200,000 every week since as the labor market appears to be largely unaffected by the Fed's rate hikes.

On Wednesday, the Fed raised interest rates by 75 basis points. The sixth rate hike of the year effectively brought rates to a peak of 400 basis points from just 25 in March.

The US central bank said interest rates had to be "sufficiently restrictive" to bring inflation down to its 2% objective over the medium term. Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, is about four times higher than the Fed's target now - standing at 8.2% during the year to September, after a 40-year peak of 9.1% in the 12 months to June.

Investors, economists and business leaders have warned for some time that the Fed's interest rate hikes could land the US economy in a recession - just 2.5 years after the last slowdown that broke out with the coronavirus pandemic in mid-2020.

The US economy did sputter in the first two quarters of the year, with back-to-back negative growth of 1.6% and 0.6% in GDP that technically placed the nation in a recession. Third-quarter GDP, however, came in at a resilient 2.6%, raising questions of whether another slowdown was likely or a soft landing was possible instead.

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US Secret Service Conducting Sweep at Mar-a-Lago After Reported Trespassing Call - Reports

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The US Secret Service is currently verifying the safety of the area at Mar-a-Lago, Florida, after the local police department received a call concerning trespassing, US media reported on Thursday.

Earlier in the day, Palm Beach police responded to a trespassing call at Mar-a-Lago, and had their units parked on the back side after which they departed the scene, an ABC reporter said via Twitter.

Mar-a-Lago is the residence of former US President Donald Trump.

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## Investing 1.4% of GDP Could Cut Emissions in Developing Countries by 70% – World Bank

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) – Developing countries could reduce emissions by as much as 70% by 2050 if they invest an average of 1.4% of GDP annually in climate action, according to a World Bank report released Thursday.

"In CCDR [Country Climate and Development Report] countries, investing an average of 1.4% of GDP in adaptation and mitigation could increase their resilience and reduce their emissions by as much as 70% by 2050," the report said.

The report, titled Climate and Development: An Agenda for Action, covers 20 countries that account for 34% of the world's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. They include: Argentina, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, China, Egypt, Ghana, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Peru, the Philippines, Rwanda, South Africa, Turkey and Vietnam.

The report noted that lower-income countries are more vulnerable to climate risk, and have markedly higher investment needs, often exceeding 5% of GDP. Thus, they will need increased amounts of concessional finance and grants to manage climate change impacts and develop along a low-carbon path.

It also argued that high-income countries with their greater responsibility for emissions need to lead the way with deeper and more rapid decarbonization, as well as increased financial support for lower-income countries.

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## US Exports to Russia Reach \$90.4Mln, Highest Level Since March - Census Bureau

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The United States exported \$90.4 million in goods to Russia in September, the highest monthly export figure since March, according to data released by the Census Bureau on Thursday.

US exports to Russia totaled \$90.4 million, the Census Bureau said. However, imports from Russia to the US totaled \$332.1 million, the lowest monthly import figure this year, the data also showed.

The US maintains a negative trade balance of more than \$11 billion with Russia so far in 2022, meaning it imports more from Russia than it exports there. The final 2021 trade balance between the US and Russia was -\$23.2 billion.

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## US Trade Deficit Widens 1st Time in 6 Months in September as Dollar Jumps - Commerce Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) - The US trade deficit widened for the first time in six months in September as exports lagged imports amid a stronger dollar that weighed on demand for American goods and services, data from the Commerce Department showed Thursday. After a five-month drop, the US trade deficit widened to \$73.3 billion as an import growth of \$4.8 billion outstripped an exports rise of \$2.8 billion in September.

Exports declined for the first time in eight months, while imports rose for the second time in six months, the Commerce Department data showed.

Import growth was rather broad based across major goods categories in September, with capital goods and consumer goods specifically leading real goods imports higher. Exports were driven lower by food and beverages specifically.

Economists said the trade deficit imports could widen in coming months, depending on the dollar, which has rallied 18% this year against a basket of six major currencies led by the euro after persistent rate hikes by the Federal Reserve trying to curb the worst US inflation in 40 years.

"Imports will likely rebound as further normalization in supply chains supports demand for inputs as does continued domestic demand for end product, exhibited by still strong consumer spending," economists at Wells Fargo said in a note. "Exports, on the other hand, look set to weaken further from here. There are clear signs of economic deceleration abroad, which will weigh on demand. At the same time, the strength of the dollar is making US goods more expensive and less competitive abroad."

The Fed on Wednesday raised rates by 75 basis points for a fourth straight time in November. The sixth rate hike of the year effectively brought rates to a peak of 400 basis points from just 25 in March.

The central bank said rates had to be "sufficiently restrictive" to bring inflation down to its 2% objective over the medium term. Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, is about four times higher than the Fed's target now — standing at 8.2% during the year to September, after a 40-year peak of 9.1% in the 12 months to June.

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US Calls on Equatorial Guinea to Support Free and Fair Vote – State Department

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) – The US State Department called on the government of Equatorial Guinea on Thursday to honor its international commitments and constitutional principles by supporting a free and fair vote as the country's election campaign season officially began.

"The United States has been concerned by reports of arrests and harassment of opposition members and civil society, and we urge the government to allow its citizens to freely and confidently express their preferences at the ballot box," State Department Spokesperson Ned Price said in a release.

The government of Equatorial Guinea frequently detains the few opposition politicians. The current president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, is Africa's longest-serving head of state,

holding power since 1979. In the last legislative elections, his ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea and its allied parties won 99 of 100 seats in the lower house, all 55 of the elected seats in the Senate, and control of all municipal councils. Equatorial Guinea's presidential and legislative elections will be held on November 20.

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Blinken Congratulates Iraq's New Prime Minister, Discusses Rights, Economy – State Dept.

WASHINGTON, November 3 (Sputnik) – US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke by phone with Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani to congratulate him on the formation of a government and reiterate US support for the country, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said on Thursday.

"The Secretary conveyed that the United States is eager to work with the government and people of Iraq to improve respect for human rights, increase economic opportunities, advance Iraq's energy independence, and address the climate crisis. He reaffirmed our commitment to supporting Iraq in the enduring defeat of ISIS [Islamic State terrorist group, banned in Russia]," Price said in a statement.

Blinken welcomed Sudani's pledge to implement reforms and fight corruption, according to the statement. The two sides also discussed mutual commitment to the bilateral Strategic Framework Agreement and shared interest in preserving Iraq's security, stability, and sovereignty, Price added.

Sudani was named prime minister last Thursday, ending the political paralysis that had gripped the nation since snap legislative elections in October 2021 failed to produce a new

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Guterres Urges Grain Deal Extension, Says 10Mln Tonnes Shipped in Just 3 Months

UNITED NATIONS, November 3 (Sputnik) - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on all parties to the grain deal to focus on extending it after Russia resumed its participation in the agreement, while expressing satisfaction at the shipment of 10 million metric tonnes of grain through the Black Sea corridor in just three months.

"Now that the initiative has fully resumed, I appeal to all parties to concentrate efforts in two areas. First, to renewal and full implementation of the Black Sea Initiative. Second, to removing the remaining obstacles to the exports of Russian food and fertilizer," Guterres said at a press stakeout.

The UN chief noted that the grain initiative has hit a new milestone.

"As of today, ten million metric tonnes of grain have been shipped through the Black Sea corridor. It has taken just three months to reach this milestone. It is time for an historic climate



pact between developed and emerging economies. At COP27, I look forward to launching an initiative to ensure every person on earth is protected by an early warning system within five years," he said.

The grain deal expires on November 19. On Thursday, the Kremlin said Russia has not committed to extending the deal, and is yet to assess its effectiveness. Moscow has repeatedly said the agreement is not effective in bringing grain and fertilizer to developing countries, while sanctions continue hindering Russia's grain and fertilizer exports even though the deal is supposed to guarantee their free flow to global markets.